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REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE OF VISITATION
TO THE
GIRARD COLLEGE FOR ORPHANS,
FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER.

To the Select and Common Councils :

The Committee of Visitation to the Girard College for Orphans, for the month of November, respectfully report, that they made two visits to the College during the month, and take pleasure in expressing their entire satisfaction with its condition and management in every department. The discipline which has been introduced into the institution, and which is so judiciously enforced by its able President and his efficient assistants, is, in the opinion of the committee, admirably adapted not only to the proper mental culture, and a correct moral training of the orphans, but also to their physical development and the promotion of their health.

The arrangement of the classes, which, when well made, is so important an auxiliary in the proper government of a school, appears to have been chosen in the College with much judgment. The boys are divided into three schools: the Principal, First Primary, and Second Primary, each embracing instruction in several branches of education; and each school is subdivided into six classes. Here, promotion from lower to higher classes, and schools, is dependent upon improvement in scholarship. There are, besides, monthly divisions of the boys into five grades, according to merit in conduct. The hope of promotion in the classes and grades, which is never denied when it is deserved, it has been found, stimulates

the boys to a more faithful application to their studies, and exerts a happy influence upon their behavior and deportment. And the committee, in witnessing the close, and in some cases, even anxious attention, which the boys give to their lessons, and their orderly and correct demeanor in the school room and out of it, received abundant evidence of the efficiency of the system.

The Professors and other instructors appear to be able and enlightened teachers, thoroughly informed in the branches of education entrusted to them, respectively, and some of them possess, in an eminent degree, the happy faculty of readily imparting knowledge to others. They all apply themselves with an earnestness that cannot be too highly commended, to a faithful discharge of the important duties committed to them, and the committee are led to believe, with a success commensurate with their zeal and ability.

As the only mode of impressing the student's mind, is to teach him to *understand* his subject, that should be the great object of education, and it appears to be fully accomplished by the method of instruction pursued in the College. *There*, it is not sufficient that the student correctly replies to a question, without hesitation or error, in the language of the author he has just read; but he is required, if he be able, to reason and interpret the answer, and if unable to do so correctly, his instructor expounds and illustrates the subject in terms suited to his powers of comprehension. Instruction thus received, is most calculated to make an enduring impression on the mind of the learner—an impression which is rarely, if ever, effaced.

The committee had great satisfaction in observing the assiduity with which the boys addressed themselves to their studies; and they were also highly gratified with the progress which nearly all have made, and the great proficiency which many have attained in them. Although it is not deemed necessary to enter into details, it may, however, be observed, that the readings were generally correct, and the compositions highly creditable, and several of them deserving of much commendation, whilst some of the drawings are beautifully executed, and furnish undeniable evidence of decided talent for the art.

It must not be supposed that any undue restraint is imposed upon the boys, nor that they are too much confined within their class rooms; but, on the contrary, when not engaged

with their lessons, they are permitted as much liberty in their section rooms as is consistent with good order, and are allowed each day ample time for recreation on large play grounds appropriated to them, where they engage in a variety of sports and amusements, invigorating themselves with wholesome exercise in the open air. They appear contented and cheerful, and enjoy a remarkable exemption from disease, there being only a few cases of slight indisposition in the College, but not one of positive sickness. This happy condition of health may be attributed, in some degree, to the discipline of the College, which prescribes a wholesome diet, sufficient exercise, regular hours and cleanliness, which are strictly attended to.

The household economy, too, is well ordered and appointed. There are ample dining rooms, commodious and well ventilated dormitories, and a large lavatory, with the necessary toilet appliances for each boy; and there is also a suitable infirmary, attended by kind, attentive, and skillful nurses. The committee deem it unnecessary to make a further or more particular enumeration of the objects which fall under this head, but will merely observe, that all of them appear to be in the best possible condition, and conducive to the comfort of the orphans.

Considering the important advantages which this institution confers upon those who are permitted to partake of its benefits, and that the orphans educated within its walls are rendered fit to engage in almost any pursuit in life, with the reasonable expectation of becoming honorable and useful members of society, what can be more desirable than to see the sphere of its usefulness enlarged? Can this be done? The number of orphans at present in the college, is three hundred and six. The committee have understood, that by fitting up rooms in the third story of the stone building, for the lodgings of the domestics, accommodations could be provided for the reception of sixty more boys into the college, being an addition of nearly one-fifth of the present number; and it is believed that the cost of maintaining and educating this additional number would not add more than one-sixth to the present annual expense of maintaining the College—that is to say, it would increase the expense from sixty thousand dollars to about seventy thousand dollars per annum. The only other expense attending this movement, would be a present

cost of fitting up rooms, and the purchase of furniture for the additional number of boys, which would not, it is presumed, require a heavy expenditure. Trusting that this object may be speedily accomplished, the committee respectfully invite the attention of the Committee on Girard Estates, and of Councils to the subject, feeling assured that it will receive from them the consideration its importance demands.

The committee, in conclusion, beg to make their acknowledgments to President Allen, and Mr. H. W. Arey, Secretary of the Board of Directors, for the many polite attentions received during their official visits to the College.

GEO. NORTON; *Chairman*,
A. F. HOPPEL,
ANDREW RHOADS,
WM. MORAN,
O. P. CORNMAN,
W. H. STOKES,
JOS. M. COWELL,
ANDREW HAGUE,
HENRY L. SMITH,
PETER F. LAWS.

Philadelphia, Dec. 7, 1854.